

REMARKS

Claims 1-12, 14-30, 33, 35 and 37 are pending in this application, of which Claims 1, 9, 20, 23, 33, 35 and 37 are independent. Claims 13, 32, 34 and 36 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 1, 9, 14 and 20 have been amended.

Applicants note with appreciation the allowance of Claims 23-30, 33, 35 and 37, and the indication that Claims 9-10 and 13-21 would be allowable if rewritten so as not to depend from a rejected claim, and with no change in scope. Since Claims 9 and 20 have been so rewritten, those claims, as well as the claims depending therefrom, are now believed to be in condition for allowance. Moreover, since the subject matter of Claim 13 has been incorporated into Claim 1, Claim 1, as well as the claims depending therefrom, are now believed to be in condition for allowance.

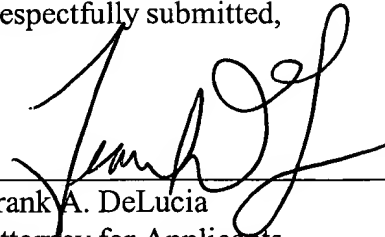
Claims 1-8, 11, 12, 22, 32, 34, and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Li et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,580,834) in view of Kennedy et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,515,853).

As above mentioned, since the subject matter of Claim 13 has been incorporated into Claim 1, Claim 1, as well as Claims 2-8, 11-12 and 22 depending therefrom, are now believed to be in condition for allowance. Furthermore, without conceding the propriety of the rejection with respect to Claims 32, 34, and 36, cancellation of Claims 32, 34, and 36 renders the rejection thereof moot.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all of the pending claims now believed to be in condition for allowance, Applicants respectfully request favorable early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank A. DeLucia', is written over a horizontal line.

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